UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.241/55/Add.3
24 June 1996

ENGLISH
Original : ENGLISH

INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA
Ninth session
New York, 3-13 September 1996
Agenda item 2

DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING: ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Note by the Secretariat

Attached, as indicated in document A/AC.241/55, is the offer of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to provide support services to the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

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Annex: 1

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Executive-Secretary
Interim Secretariat of the
Convention to Combat Desertification
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BP 76
CH-1219 CHATELAINE, Genève

Geneva, 12 March 1996

Dear Mr Diallo,

In compliance with the decision of the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD), given in paragraph c) of document A/AC.241/WGI(8).L1, please find attached WMO expression of interest to host the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) in its New Headquarters Building in Geneva for your further attention.

Yours sincerely,

(G.O.P. Obasi)
Secretary-General

DESIGNATION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CCD)

Introduction

In compliance with the decision of the eighth session of the INCD (A/AC 241/WG I8()/L.1, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) would like to offer to host the Permanent Secretariat of the CCD in its New Headquarters Building which is expected to be ready at the end of 1998.

The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio described desertification as land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry-subhumid areas resulting from various factors, including climate variations and human activities and called for the preparation of an international convention to be elaborated. In response to this request, the UN General Assembly established the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee on Desertification (INCD) by its Resolution 47/188 dated 22 December 1992 for the elaboration of the Convention. WMO has for many years been promoting actions aimed at combatting desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. WMO is also involved in programmes aimed at monitoring the climate and at understanding the meteorological and hydrological processes which underlie variations in the climate and incidence of drought. In recognition of this and of the strong link between desertification on the one hand and drought and climate variability on the other hand, WMO therefore was one of the organizations invited to provide appropriate contributions to the work of the INCD. WMO is the UN specialized agency responsible for meteorology, operational hydrology and related disciplines; climate variability drought and desertification are very much linked to these WMO areas of responsibility.

Accordingly WMO was involved in the development of the Convention right from the initial stages. It thus became one of the three environmental Conventions with which WMO has been involved. The others were the Framework Convention on Climate Change and Convention on Biological Diversity both of which greatly implicate WMO and its Members.

Moreover, the Convention, in its various articles adopted on 17 June 1994, emphasized the problems of drought and climate in the drylands, many of which are linked to the mandate, concerns and general objectives of WMO and its Members, viz National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.

Organizational and administrative arrangements

In view of this complementarity of the mandates and general objectives of WMO and the INCD Interim Secretariat, WMO has throughout the negotiating process seconded one of its staff members to the Interim Secretariat to deal with documentation of sessions of the INCD regarding meteorological and hydrological aspects of the Convention. Furthermore, WMO has been co-operating with the Interim Secretariat in many other ways, including financial and secretarial services in order to ensure its efficient functioning. WMO is willing to continue this assistance.

WMO is presently hosting two Secretariats of relevance to the objectives of the Convention. These are the WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Joint Planning Office of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) co-sponsored jointly by WMO, ICSU, UNEP and IOC of the UNESCO, whose functions are relevant to the objectives of the Convention. The co-location of the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention in WMO will enable it to benefit from interacting closely with the above Secretariats as well as from programmes of WMO, in particular Agricultural Meteorology Programme, the World Climate Programme (WCP), Hydrology and Water Resources Programme (HWR) and the World Weather Watch (WWW) whose functions are related to the development of the drylands and hence the mandate of the Convention. In addition, the World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS) established jointly by the World Bank, WMO and UNESCO with other agencies to deal with issues relating to hydrology and water resources, also has a strong link to the mandate and objectives of the Convention.

It is therefore to be noted that there will be considerable operational merits and that relating economic benefits will accrue to the Secretariat of CCD through its co-location in WMO, without being integrated into the WMO structure.

Main features of office and services

WMO is in the process of constructing a New Headquarters Building in Geneva, expected to be ready at the end of 1998. Adequate office space can be made available for accommodating the Secretariat. In addition, facilities for conferences and other general services (such as restaurant/cafeteria facilities, security, garage, office maintenance, communication facilities, etc., will be available in the building which will be located at walking distance from the UN Office, several other UN and international organizations located in Geneva. WMO would be willing to consider offering advantageous rental conditions, should its offer be accepted.

Other local facilities and conditions

With regard to availability or access to certain local services and facilities which are important for the efficient functioning of the Permanent Secretariat, Geneva is well suited and located as regards diplomatic representation by most affected countries and the relevant international organizations. Efficient logistics and infrastructure such as international transport and travel facilities, local transportation, reliable communications facilities, etc., render it to be a preferred location. Geneva is also well-placed for access to efficient health services, suitable living accommodation, educational and banking facilities.

WMO's objective

WMO's primary interest in hosting the Permanent Secretariat of the CCD underlines its commitment to the mission of the Convention to assist the drylands through the application of meteorological and hydrological data and information in their development objectives.

WMO therefore wishes to be considered for hosting the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification.